

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Arts Assessment Update

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 158.645, KRS 158.6453

History/Background:

Existing Policy. In 2004, the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) began to engage in deliberate conversations around needed improvements to the state assessment program. A structure for guiding the conversation was the document titled “Seven Steps Forward in Assessment” that outlined a number of enhancements and future goals for the state assessment system. Section 2B of that document addresses improvement of assessment in the Arts and Humanities.

In August 2004, a briefing paper was shared with the KBE members. The paper provided an overview of some of the issues and concerns related to assessment and accountability of Arts and Humanities, advice from the Arts Advisory Group and Arts Task Force, a summary of the work at that time and proposed next steps. A key concern expressed by arts groups and other stakeholders was that the current assessment format did not allow for the three critical arts processes of creating, performing, and responding to the arts to be assessed.

In 2005, prior to the issuing of a Request for Proposals for the new assessment contract, the Kentucky Board of Education established ten directions for future assessment in Kentucky. Among those was the following:

8. *The KBE wishes staff to initiate pilot studies to develop and/or identify assessment approaches in Arts and Humanities ... that will address what students do as well as what they know in these areas.*

The initial result of these steps was to allow potential vendors to propose alternative assessment models for Arts and Humanities in their response to the KDE statewide assessment RFP. The final assessment design did not include a component for alternatives to assessment in the arts. KDE staff was charged with continuing to work on a model for assessment and accountability for possible implementation in the future.

The purpose of this staff note is to update the Kentucky Board of Education on the work focused on a future Arts and Humanities Assessment and Accountability model and to seek guidance from the KBE.

Current Status/Future Vision

Recommendations of the Arts Task Force, the Arts Advisory Group and established KBE directions have been used to formulate alternative models for assessment and accountability in the arts. An operational goal is to have all the components of a new assessment and accountability model implemented within the next five years or by the end of the 2011-2012 school year. A timeline has been established for piloting assessment and accountability models and plans are to begin that process in the 2007-2008 school year in a limited number of schools.

Other pilot assessment projects have been conducted through a partnership with the Kentucky Music Educators Association that included using assessment items that involve listening to an excerpt of music and then answering either multiple-choice questions or open response questions based on the musical example. This type of assessment has been piloted at the elementary, middle, and high school level in schools across the state.

In cooperation with Measured Progress, the current assessment contractor, KDE is working to find ways to move the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) for the Arts and Humanities to a format that would involve technology and potentially online administration. This type of assessment would allow for visual and audio prompts in all of the art forms and provide a much more authentic assessment, where students respond to actual arts examples and performances.

Instructional Focus for Arts and Humanities Education

Instructional focus for Arts and Humanities education is established by the *Program of Studies* regulation. Established in the introductory paragraphs from the *Program of Studies* (shown below) are the elements of focus for arts study. An arts assessment and accountability model is best designed to align with this instructional focus at each level so that actual measurement of the *Program of Studies* implementation can occur.

1. Program of Studies – Arts and Humanities – Elementary

The arts and humanities program at the elementary level centers on an **exploration** of the art forms of dance, drama/theatre, music and visual arts. Emphasis is placed on exposing students to a variety of arts through active experiences in all four art forms. This exploration includes a beginning of literacy development in the arts content areas, basic level analysis and critique of the arts, and active creating and performing in the arts.

2. Program of Studies – Arts and Humanities – Middle School

The arts and humanities program at the middle school level centers on establishing **grounding in the arts** so that students are able to communicate at a basic level in each of the art forms of dance, drama/theatre, music and visual arts. Emphasis is placed on exposing students to a variety of arts through active experiences in all four art forms. At this level, students may have already begun to focus on one art form for more in-depth study. This will help students

to prepare should they choose specialization in one art form at the high school level. Grounding in the arts involves literacy development in the four arts content areas, analysis and critique of the arts, and active creating and performing in the arts.

3. Program of Studies – Arts and Humanities – High School

At the high school level, students **may choose to specialize** in one or more art forms. **Specialization will enable students to study an art form in an in-depth** manner and work toward achieving proficiency and mastery in creating, performing, and responding to their chosen art form. Students who specialize in an art form will participate in performance-based arts courses designed to develop skills and understanding that will enable students to use the art form as a high-level communication tool. This is accomplished through the development of creativity and production or performance skills. Performance-based courses also connect the arts with their historical and cultural contexts as students study exemplary works and learn the impact of time, place and personality on the arts. In addition, these courses promote an understanding of the interrelationships among the arts disciplines and connections with other academic content areas.

Components of The Draft Arts Assessment and Accountability Model

KDE staff has acted on the charge from the KBE to look at more appropriate ways to measure students' understanding and appreciation of the arts. Additionally, recommendations from the Arts Task Force and Arts Advisory Group, recommendations from the field, and a review of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessment standards have been integrated to create a draft model for moving Arts and Humanities assessment and accountability forward.

The draft model (Attachment A) keeps in place the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) and also moves beyond pencil and paper assessments to include additional kinds of measurements for the three critical arts processes (creating, performing and responding to the arts). This draft model is also designed to enable KDE to begin to address KRS 158.6453(d) that calls for

“Performance assessment events for schools that have students enrolled in performing arts organizations sponsoring sanctioned events with an established protocol for adjudication.”

Action research is necessary for each of the new components of the draft model for assessment and accountability. The components will need to be piloted so that data and evidence of their effectiveness can be gathered and reviewed. This information can be used to inform next steps for improvement of arts and humanities assessment and accountability.

1. The Kentucky Core Content Test

The KCCT has proven to be a reliable way to measure student ability to respond to the arts and remains a component of the draft model. There will be further work to improve and offer a more authentic assessment through the use of technology, eventually leading to online

assessment. Students can experience visual and audio examples of visual and performing arts through the use of technology and this will greatly enhance KCCT assessments in the arts.

2. Arts Program Evaluation Tool

An arts program evaluation tool (Attachment B) designed to measure opportunities to learn is another component. This tool will allow schools to measure their arts and humanities programs against quality standards applying an approach similar to the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement (SISI) process used by school audit and review teams. Indicators on this tool would describe a range of quality based on little or no implementation to exemplary program implementation. This will provide a measurement of opportunities that the school is providing for students to learn as they create, perform, and respond to the arts.

This tool will also enable a measurement, to some degree, of school participation in performance assessment events and described in KRS 158.6453(d). Since performance assessment events can be included through indicators of program quality they become measurable. This tool also provides a pathway to improvement for the school the same as the SISI document and the audit process.

3. School Level Evidence of Quality Arts and Humanities Programs

An additional component to the model involves a school level portfolio or “evidence file” that would be used to collect evidence that will support program quality review decisions. Supporting evidence that is suggested directly in the program evaluation tool would be gathered to reflect the level of implementation and decisions about the level of implementation for defined standards.

Policy Issues:

What guidance or recommendations can the Kentucky Board of Education provide as we continue this work?

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

The recent revisions of the *Program of Studies* and *Core Content for Arts and Humanities Assessment* have opened the door to greater student achievement and a measure of true proficiency in Arts and Humanities. Both documents promote the three critical arts processes of creating, performing, and responding to the arts which together provide a great deal of relevance to arts education. Aligning assessment and accountability to include the three critical arts processes will offer the opportunity to broaden the definition of proficiency to include the creating and performing processes.

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Current KCCT Assessment/Accountability

Pencil and paper assessment measuring only the student's ability to respond to the arts.



Future Vision of Assessment/Accountability

Pencil and paper assessment to measure the student's ability to respond to the arts. (KCCT eventually moving to a technology-based assessment administered online.)

Arts program evaluation tool used to measure opportunities that schools are providing for students to learn the arts through activities in creating, performing and responding to the arts.

A school level portfolio or "evidence file" containing evidence that supports the results of the school program evaluation.

Individual Learning Plans support completion of arts and humanities standards.